

81-1615/1

6 AUG 1981

Executive Registry

81-1956/1

DD/A REGISTRY

FILE: 94

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Harry E. Fitzwater
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: Language Training

REFERENCE: Memo for DDA from DCI, dated 30 July 1981,
Subject: Language Training

This memorandum is in response to referenced memorandum regarding the foreign language situation in the United States. Each question is treated individually in the attachment: the national situation, national policy initiatives, Language School capability, Language School national initiatives and a national language reserve.

[Redacted Signature Box]

Harry E. Fitzwater

STAT

Attachment

cc: DDCI w/att

National Situation

"Americans' incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse." This statement in November 1979 from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies indicates the results of: (a) shrinking immigrant populations (except for Hispanics and Southeast Asians), (b) removal or reduction of college language requirements in the 1960s and '70s, and (c) a lack of academic emphasis upon functional foreign language competence. The ultimate consequence to government agencies, which requires foreign language capability, is a decreasing source of native speakers, fewer language trained students and lower skills in those trained. An increasing burden is thereby placed upon the four government language schools that belong to the Foreign Service Institute, the Defense Language Institute, the National Security Agency and the CIA.

National Initiatives

A national policy to remedy poor language capability is best served by indications of strong interest and concern from the executive and legislative branches of government and by the provision of both financial and moral support to selected means of improving language competence as recommended by the President's Commission. We believe a particularly important effort would be to foster cooperation among government and professional societies concerned with language training. A joint effort should be directed toward establishing a central clearing house and registry to certify teachers and testers according to qualifications based upon established national standards. Exchange of information regarding teaching techniques and managerial aspects of foreign language training could be accomplished through such a center.

At present there is a lack of unity among the professional societies that could lobby for a single coordinated program in spite of the fact that a consortium of most of the national language-related professional societies is represented by the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) which has established a Washington office. A unified effort by the professional groups in combination with language-concerned government agencies represented in the Interagency Language Roundtable could bring a focus to a national effort for language improvement.

Language School Capability

At the present time the Agency's Language School is capable of providing instruction in some 25 foreign languages using a staff of 40 full-time instructors supplemented by a cadre of 49 part-time and intermittent instructors. In addition, the Language School has recently received 10 additional full-time instructor positions which will enable the School to meet projected increases in requirements.

Research has shown that the single most important variable in determining whether or not a language student attains the desired fluency is length of time spent in training. In an effort to provide more flexibility to the Operations Directorate, which supplies approximately 90 percent of the Language School full-time students, a 100-position development complement for language training has been established. Better planning and longer training programs will now be possible.

CIA's role in a long-term, broadly based program for language improvement was discussed in detail on page 17 of the attachment to my 28 April 1981 memorandum to the DDCI on improving language capability at CIA. Briefly, this paper called for a concerted effort through training and recruitment to increase the fulfillment rate--currently at 42 percent--of Agency positions designated as requiring foreign language proficiency. This initiative is being taken. The Language Incentive Program, which rewards the development and maintenance of foreign language skills, will also be continued.

Language School National Initiatives

In cooperation with other government agencies as well as with members of the academic world, representatives of the Language School are promoting the development of a national oral proficiency testing system based on the FSI oral interview technique. This system, when extended from government usage to universities and secondary schools, will provide a common standard to be used in testing communicative skills. Given the American proclivity for letting the testing system drive course content, it will also encourage the restructuring of curriculum and of now inappropriate instructional techniques. By demonstrating at professional conferences how this testing system works, the Agency is making known the need in the government for functional language capability. The Language School is also developing a handbook on government-wide oral proficiency testing techniques and rating standards which will serve as a very useful reference tool and guide to those using the system.

The Language School will continue to play a prominent role in professional language associations in order to make more evident the Agency's interest in and commitment to language competence and quality language instruction. Several papers dealing with oral proficiency testing techniques already have been presented at meetings of professional language conferences, and a description of our total immersion programs is being proposed for inclusion on the program of the next Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. In addition, an exchange of instructional techniques through the Interagency Language Roundtable--to include representatives from the academic world as well--is another way for the Agency to contribute to a national program for the improvement of language competence. Finally, through appearances at high school and university forums, members of the Language School can play an active role in the propagation of foreign language awareness throughout the country by emphasizing the interest of the government in all kinds of language skills.

National Language Reserve

A number of organizations, including language-specific professional societies, metropolitan areas, and university communities have designed informal language referral systems. However, the only major systematic effort to maintain an up-to-date information file in a language-related area has been undertaken by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). We are not sure of the kind of language information they maintain but are virtually certain it is not extensive. The project was funded by the U.S. Office of Education several years ago. Any serious effort to research the ultimate feasibility of a national effort should include consultation with individuals who have had experience running the more restricted operations.

Currently, most of the national language-specific professional organizations (e.g., the American Association of Teachers of French) publish a membership directory. Unlike the work of the AAASS, noted above, virtually all names to be found on these lists would be those of individuals who are primarily in the language teaching field. Probably the most useful existing resource for contacting speakers of the less commonly taught languages is the language index of the Guide to Programs in Linguistics published by the Linguistic Society of America. This guide lists many of the lesser known languages and gives the names of college and university faculty members in the U.S. and Canada who are involved in some way with them.

We have two fundamental reservations/caveats concerning the idea of a "national language reserve": one concerns language skill verification, the other, expense. Language capability must be verified (i.e., tested by some valid and reliable means) in order for any referral system to have real utility. Obviously, the government, when in need of an important translation or interpretation, wants to be assured of receiving or sending the right message. The principal problems in test development and administration would probably not be present in the commonly taught languages. In the lesser known languages where test instruments do not exist, there would be serious obstacles.

In order to provide a real resource in times of linguistic crisis, the data base under consideration would have to be extremely current, i.e., it would need to be updated several times a year. The costs of keeping such a referral system up to date are huge; more than one such federally funded referral system has been obliged to terminate operation because of the expense of file maintenance. Operational security considerations would preclude the inclusion of many Agency language-qualified people in such a roster.

Despite the cautionary remarks which have been stated above, a modest trial effort at a language bank could be launched for the government community in the Washington, D.C., area. Such a project would present several advantages: the various agencies which would be involved are already in regular contact through the Interagency Language Roundtable; any questions relating to security are likely to be more easily resolved; a large proportion of potential prospects for the referral system has already been certified by the oral interview examination. Additionally, a project of this kind could be established under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Task Force on the Linguistic Problem which could serve the Intelligence Community alone.

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

81-1906/1

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM: Harry E. Fitzwater
DDA
7D24 Hqs.

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across columns after each comment.)

1. DDCI
7E12 Hqs.

8/10

8/10

J

2. DCI

Rec'd
1 August

FEB 1982

J

3.

4. DDA

5.

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11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

STAT

81-1906

SECRET

81-1615

30 July 1981

OTE REGISTRY
81-9514

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration
FROM: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT: Language Training

1. I would like to have the most informed person in the house on the language situation, language training here, and language capabilities and teaching in the United States, prepare a memorandum for me. It would quickly describe the situation, set out the initiatives available for dealing with it within the Agency, the initiatives available from a national policy standpoint and the private institutions and movements which are addressing or available to address the problems of improving capabilities in the United States. [redacted] tells me that there is a group of language teachers and others interested in language fluency in the United States which is functioning in some way here in Washington. I have [redacted] memorandum on this subject.

25X1

2. I would like this memorandum to include some reaction for an idea which Senator Schmitt has for the creation of a national language reserve which would seek to identify and list people in all walks of life who have multiple language fluency. His notion is that this would serve as a reserve in times of special need as in the Iranian crisis or possibly a much more far reaching crisis. In non-crisis periods this reserve would presumably carry on activities designed to extend interest in foreign languages and develop additional capability. Just what these programs might be is not clear. I would like any ideas that you may be capable of generating.

[redacted]

for William J. Casey

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

SECRET

OTE 81-3737

6 AUG 1981
DDA REGISTRY
FILE: *Training*

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Harry E. Fitzwater

Harry E. Fitzwater

Attachment

cc: DDCI w/att

OTE/LS/ [] (4 Aug 81)

Distribution:

- Orig - Addressee w/att
- 1 - DDCI w att
- 1 - ER w/att
- ✓ 2 - DDA w/att
- 2 - DTE w/att
- 2 - OTE Registry w/att
- 2 - LS w/att

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Approved For Release 2003/08/13 : CIA-RDP84B00890R000800010040-7
 ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)	Initials	Date
1. EXO/DDA - 7D24 Hqs.	<i>[Signature]</i>	6 AUG 1981
2. A/DDA	<i>[Signature]</i>	8-6
3. DDA		
4.		
5.		

Action	File	Note and Return
Approval	For Clearance	Per Conversation
As Requested	For Correction	Prepare Reply
Circulate	For Your Information	See Me
Comment	Investigate	Signature
Coordination	Justify	

REMARKS

Memo to DCI on Language Training for signature.

Suspense Date: 6 August 1981

[Large handwritten signature and initials]

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

	Room No.—Bldg.
	1026 C of C
	Phone No.

Approved For Release 2003/08/13 : CIA-RDP84B00890R000800010040-7

STAT

STAT

IMMEDIATE

Approved For Release 2003/08/13 : CIA-RDP84B00890R000800010040-7

ROUTINE

TO: (Name, office
building, Agency)

Form
7-65 160c

(13)

Date

30 JUL
1981

1. EO/DDA

2. ADDA

4. DTE

Action	File	Note and Return
Approval	For Clearance	Per Conversation
As Requested	For Correction	Prepare Reply
Circulate	For Your Information	See Me
Comment	Investigate	Signature
Coordination	Justify	

REMARKS

4. For your action. Pls note DCI suspense
of 6 August.

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)

Room No.—Bldg.

EO/DDA

Phone No.

5041-102

OPTIONAL FORM 41 (Rev. 7-76)
Prescribed by GSA
FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.206

☆ GPO : 1980 O - 311-156 (17)

SECRET

Executive Registry

81-1615

30 July 1981

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25X1

[redacted]

25X1

SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

Approved For Release 2003/08/13 : CIA-RDP84B00890R000800010040-7

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

Routing Slip

TO:

000

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	D/ICS				
4	DD/NFA				
5	DD/A	X			
6	DD/O				
7	DD/S&T				
8	GC				
9	LC				
10	IG				
11	Compt				
12	D/PA				
13	D/EE0				
14	D/Pers				
15	D/ExStf				
16	AO/DCI				
17	D/OPP		X		
18	ES		X		
19					
20					
21					
22					

SUSPENSE 6 August

Date

Remarks:

ILLEGIB

D/Executive Secretary

30 July 81

Date